

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BORDEA 00150 121644Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00 PM-04  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0653  
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMCONSUL LYON  
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE  
AMCONSUL NICE  
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

UNCLAS BORDEAUX 0150

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, FR  
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER BARRE'S VISIT TO POITOU-CHARENTE, JULY 11.

REF: BORDEAUX 148

### SUMMARY

DURING HIS VISIT OF JULY 11 IN THE POITOU-CHARENTES REGION OF SOUTH WEST FRANCE, THE PRIME MINISTER MADE HIGHLY POLITICIZED PRESENTATIONS BEFORE AUDIENCES WHICH CONSISTED MAINLY OF CITY COUNSELLORS AND HEADS OF SMALL BUSINESSES (AT ANGOULEME) AND MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL COUNCILS (AT POITIERS). HE WAS MET BY CRITICAL C.G.T. DEMONSTRATORS AT ALL HIS STOPS. M. BARRE'S CRITICISMS OF THE COMMON PROGRAM OF THE LEFT WERE BALANCED BY SHARPLY BARBED REMARKS ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAM BY THE SOCIALIST MAYOR OF ANGOULEME AND BY MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL COUNCILS AT POITIERS. AS USUAL, THE PRIME MINISTER REFUSED TO MAKE UNTENABLE PROMISES FOR SOLUTION OF IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS BUT SPOKE RATHER OF LONG TERM SOLUTIONS. HE MADE REPEATED PLEAS FOR SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM WHICH HE SAID

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BORDEA 00150 121644Z

WOULD SUCCEED.

### TEXT

THOUGH M. BARRE'S VISIT TO THE POITOU-CHARENTES REGION HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED AS BEING DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO ECONOMIC QUESTIONS, ALL LOCAL COMMENTATORS AGREED THAT, AS PREDICTED, IT HAD IN FACT BEEN HIGHLY POLITICAL. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY M. MONORY,

MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND M. ESSIG, GENERAL DELEGATE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERRITORY (AMENAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE).

THE FOUR ESSENTIAL ECONOMIC ISSUES OF THE AREA DISCUSSED WERE: 1. UNEMPLOYMENT.

2. THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE HANDICRAFTS AND OF SMALL AND MID SIZED BUSINESSES (PARTICULARLY IN SHOE MANUFACTURE AND PAPER PRODUCTS).

3. THE CRISIS IN THE COGNAC INDUSTRY (INCLUDING A RECENT DROP IN SALES TO THE U.S., SUPPOSEDLY BECAUSE OF "DISCRIMINATORY" U.S. TAXATION).

4. THE INSUFFICIENCY OF TRANSPORT IN THE AREA, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE PAUCITY OF SUPER HIGHWAYS.

THE PRIME MINISTER WAS FORTHCOMING ON TWO SUBJECTS AFFECTING THE AREA:

1. THE SUPER HIGHWAY CONNECTING POITIERS AND BORDEAUX. HE SAID THAT THIS WOULD BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE END OF 1981 AND THAT TO DO SO IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO INCREASE THE FRENCH NATIONAL SUPER HIGHWAY BUDGET BY 100 MILLIONS FRANCS. SPECIFICALLY, 27.8 MILLION FRANCS WOULD BE AUTHORIZED IN 1978 FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN NATIONAL ROUTE 10, "THE UMBILICAL CORD OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF CHARENTE AND VIENNE

THERE WERE ALSO 18.7 MILLION FRANCS PROMISED FOR OTHER ROAD PROJECTS IN THE AREA.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BORDEA 00150 121644Z

2. ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE COASTAL PORTIONS OF THE AREA, (10 MILLION FRANCS IN 1978) AND ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS, (3.5 MILLION FRANCS IN 1978).

THOUGH A NUMBER OF HIS INTERLOCUTORS PLED FOR TARIFF PROTECTION AGAINST RUINOUS FOREIGN COMPETITION, M. BARRE REPLIED WITH THE CLASSIC ARGUMENTS CONCERNING THE DANGERS OF SUCH A POLICY FOR FRANCE (RETALIATION, ETC). IN GENERAL, THOSE WHO QUESTIONED THE PRIME MINISTER WERE MOST CONCERNED WITH IMMEDIATE AND LOCAL PROBLEMS, WHILE HIS REPLIES TENDED TO EMPHASIZE THE LONG TERM AND NATIONAL. AS AN EXAMPLE, WHEN MAYOR CREPEAU OF LA ROCHELLE COMPLAINED OF THE VERY LIMITED CREDITS ACCORDED TO THE POITOU-CHARENTES AREA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FACTORIES AND THE ACCOMPANYING INFRASTRUCTURE, IN COMPARISON WITH THE LARGE SUMS SUDDENLY GRANTED FOR THE BRAUD-ET SAINT LOUIS NUCLEAR FACILITY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF GIRONDE, M. BARRE REPLIED THAT NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT WAS A NATIONAL PRIORITY. HE SAID THIS PRIORITY WOULD HAVE TO BE MAINTAINED BY ANY FUTURE GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO ASSURE FRENCH ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND BALANCE OF PAYMENTS.

IN HIS CRITICISM OF THE COMMON PROGRAM OF THE FRENCH LEFT, M. BARRE CHARACTERIZED PROPOSALS FOR MERCHANTS COOPERATIVES,

GROUPINGS OF HANDICRAFT WORKERS, COOPERATION BETWEEN SMALL AND MID SIZED BUSINESSES AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR AND, FINALLY, NATIONALIZATIONS UPON THE REQUEST OF EMPLOYEES AS "UNREALISTIC AND DANGEROUS PROJECTS WHICH I HOPE WILL NEVER SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY".

THE PRIME MINISTER'S PLEAS FOR SUPPORT AND CRITICISMS OF THE LEFT WERE WARMLY APPLAUDED BY THE HANDICRAFT WORKERS AND BY THE SMALL AND MEDIUM BUSINESS OWNERS, THOUGH THEY WERE MET WITH MORE RESERVE ELSEWHERE.

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009